

STATEMENT AND RESOLUTION ON THE SETTING OF OBSTETRICAL DELIVERY*

THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

Advocacy and implementation of home births have become a source of controversy both here^{1,2} and abroad.³⁻⁶ While home deliveries in Europe are on the decline,^{6,7} there have been increases in the percentage of planned home births in some parts of the United States during the past 10 years.⁸ Due to inadequacies in the methods of collecting data on home births, statistical risks of home births cannot be determined.^{1,8,9}

Home births for those at low risk are advocated by some as a family-centered alternative to hospital based obstetrical care.^{10,11} A "no-risk" obstetrical population cannot be identified even through careful screening prior to delivery.¹² Home delivery, therefore, poses an increased risk to the pregnant woman and fetus.

Hospital-based obstetrical practice has been described as "probably the best example of practical preventive medicine."³ It can be and has been combined with the positive aspects of the home birth experience to provide a hospital based yet home-like environment for the family.^{13,14}

Resolution

WHEREAS, a population entirely free of the risks of childbearing cannot be identified, and

WHEREAS, there is no effective way to provide rapid emergency delivery in the home environment if indicated, and

WHEREAS, blood replacement and volume expanders cannot be made rapidly available in the home environment, and

WHEREAS, in the event of an emergency, rapid transportation from home to hospital cannot be assured, and

WHEREAS, labor and delivery, while a physiologic process, clearly

*Prepared by the Subcommittee of Maternity and Family Planning Services of the Committee on Public Health of the New York Academy of Medicine. Approved by the Committee on Public Health on December 6, 1982 and the Council of the New York Academy of Medicine on February 23, 1983.

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presents potential hazards to both mother and fetus before and after birth, and

WHEREAS, these hazards require standards of safety which are provided in the hospital setting and cannot be matched in the home situation, and

WHEREAS, the desire of women to give birth in the most home-like environment possible is recognized.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

- 1) A hospital is the recommended place for planned obstetrical delivery.
- 2) Efforts be made to establish a more widely effective home-like family centered birthing environment within the hospital setting.
- 3) Full support be given those actions that improve the experience of the family while continuing to provide the mother and her infant with accepted standards of safety available only in hospitals which confirm to standards as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

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